

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

COME-00 FCSC-01 FRB-03 TRSE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02

/056 W

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R 031150Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1600

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 3451

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CZ, SU

SUBJECT: SOVIET INTEREST IN CLAIMS/GOLD

1. SOVIET DCM BELETSKI, WHO ONLY INFREQUENTLY APPEARS AT LOCAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS FUNCTIONS, SOUGHT ME OUT (PROBABLY ON INSTRUCTION) AT BELGIAN RECEPTION DEC. 1. AFTER WIDE-RANGING QUESTIONING ON SIMON VISIT TO MOSCOW, U.S. REACTIONS TO RECENT WARSAW PACT PCC MEETING, THE POST-MAO LEADERSHIP SITUATION IN CHINA, WHO WILL BE PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S SECSTATE, ETC., HE GOT TO WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY HIS MAIN POINT -- U.S.-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS, WHICH HE CANDIDLY OBSERVED WERE OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO MOSCOW.

2. WHEN I NOTED DIFFICULTY WE HAD OBTAINING CONTACTS WITH GOC OFFICIALS, IN SPITE OF MUCH TALK ABOUT CSCE, BELETSKI SAID THE REAL CAUSE OF PROBLEMS IN OUR RELATIONS IS CLAIMS/GOLD ISSUE AND CRITICIZED U.S. FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT INITIALED 1974 # I REJECTED HIS STATEMENT AND POINTED OUT CONGRESS HAS PROPER ROLE TO PLAY IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. BELETSKI THEN ASKED WHAT WAS CURRENTLY HAPPENING ON THE ISSUE AND SUGGESTED SOVIET EMBASSY MIGHT DO SOMETHING TO ASSIST IN RESOLVING IT, IF USG "COMES FORWARD WITH A REASONABLE PROPOSAL." HE SAID USSR HAS AN INTEREST IN SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM AND SUGGESTED THAT I BE IN TOUCH WITH THE SOVIET EMBASSY WHEN WE ARE READY TO MOVE ON THE PROBLEM.

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3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST SIGN THAT ANYONE CURRENTLY AT POST CAN RECALL OF SOVIET INTEREST IN CLAIMS/GOLD. WE SEE THREE ASPECTS TO BELETSKI'S APPROACH:

A) ASSERTION OF SOVIET HEGEMONY IN THIS PART OF ITS EE "SPHERE-OF-INFLUENCE;"

B) ATTEMPT TO BRING CLAIMS/GOLD (AND PRESUMABLY MFN FOR CSSR) INTO CAMPAIGN SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE ENGAGED IN TO HAVE U.S. REMOVE ITS BARRIERS TO IMPORTS FROM SOME CEMA COUNTRIES (E.G. BREZHNEV SPEECH NOV. 30 TO US-USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL);

C) AND POSSIBLY A MORE GENERAL INDICATION OF SOVIET REALIZATION THAT IF CEMA IS TO BREAK OUT OF ITS ECONOMIC STAGNATION, MORE ADVANCED MEMBERS WILL NEED WIDER OPENING TO WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND MARKETS, WHICH REQUIRES SOVIETS TO TRY TO HELP SOLVE SPECIFIC BILATERAL PROBLEMS OF ITS CLIENT STATES.

4. WE, OF COURSE, HAVE NO INTENTION IN FOLLOWING UP ON THIS SOVIET EFFORT TO TAKE A ROLE IN THIS KEY BILATERAL ISSUE BETWEEN USG AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BUT WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY SIMILAR OVERTURES THAT MAY BE MADE IN WASHINGTON OR TO EMBASSY MOSCOW. BYRNE

NOTE BY OCT: #PGH 2 AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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